

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KUALA 02089 060817Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 /043 W

-----060853Z 079956 /21

R 060209Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6745

INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 2089

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, MY, SN

SUBJECT: JAMES PUTHUCHEARY'S ANALYSI OF DEREK

DAVIES TAPE CASE

1. JAMES PUTHUCHEARY, WHO FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN THE CONFESSIONS OF DETAINED SINGAPORE LAWYER A. RAMAN, HAS PROVIDED ME WITH HIS ANALYSIS OF PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW'S REASNSFOR SURFACING THE TAPE MADE BY THE EDITOR OF THE FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW AFTER A CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER LEE A YEAR AGO. PUTHUCHEARY MAKES NO CLAIMS FOR HIS THREORY, BUT OFFERED IT AS THE BEST EXPLANATION HE COULD COME UP WITH.

2. AT THE ROOT OF LEE'S MOTIVATION (ACCORDING TO PUTHUCHEARY) LIES A BASIC MISJUDGMENT OF HUSSEIN ONN. LEE HAS INTERPRETED PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN'S MILD MANNER, MODESTY, AND DISLIKE FOR THE LIMELIGHT, AS EVIDENCE OF A PLIABLE, INDICISIVE PERSON, SUBJECT TO THE PRESSURES AND INFLUENCE OF HIS ADVISERS. PUTHUCHEARY'S PAST CLOSE PERSONAL LINKS WITH HUSSEIN HAVE THEREFORE BEEN SOURCE OF DEEP SUSPICION. THE SINGAPORE POLICE SPECIAL BRANCH REPRESENTATIVE IN THE SINGAPORE HIGH COMMISSION, E.R. NAIDU, WHO RECENTLY HAS TRANSFERRED TO JAKARTA, WAS PUTHUCHEARY'S CASE OFFICER
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 KUALA 02089 060817Z

WHILE HE WAS IN SINGAPORE PRISON AND MONITORED VISITS OF PUTHUCHEARY'S WIFE. IN K.L. HE SHOWED INTEREST IN PUTHUCHEARY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HUSSEIN AND WAS AWARE THAT PRIOR TO ASSUMPTION OF PRIME MINISTER'S PORTFOLIO AFTER RAZAK'S DEATH, PUTHCHEARY HAD PLAYED GOLF ALMOST EVERY SUNDAY WITH HUSSEIN. LEE ASSUMED THAT PUTHUCHEARY WAS INFLUENCING AN IMPRESSIONALBE, POLITICALLY INNOCENT HUSSEIN, AND POISONING

HIS MIND ABOUT LEE KUAN YEW.

3. THE CONFESSIONS OF RAMAN AND ARUN (CONTINUES THE PUTHUCHEARY ANALYSIS) WERE SEIZED UPON BY LEE AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO STRIKE AT THIS SNAKE IN THE BOSOM OF PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN, AND PUT PRESSURE UPON THE MALAYSIAN POLICE TO ARREST PUTHUCHEARY, AS SIMILAR TACTICS HAD PRODUCED THE ARREST OF SAMAD ISMAIL. IN THIS CASE, HOWEVER, THE SINGAPORE REVELATIONS PRODUCED ONLY A CASUAL AND FRIENDLY CALL BY THE SPECIAL BRANCH ON HIS BROTHER, DOMINIC.

4. FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE, CONTINUED PUTHUCHEARY, HUSSEIN ONN IS A MAN WHO DOES NOT DEPEND ON ADVISERS AND HAS NO TRUE INTIMATES OR CONFIDANTES. HE DAMANDS OF THE CIVIL SERVICE AND HIS SO-CALLED ADVISERS CAREFULLY WRITTEN OPTION PAPERS. HE GOES OVER THEM METICULOUSLY, AND THEN WITH NO PERSONAL INPUTS FROM ANY SOURCE, MAKES HIS OWN DECISIONS. HE RESPECTS PUTHUCHEARY'S PRESENT POSITION AS A TAX LAWYER IN PRIVATE PRACTICE AND NEVER DISCUSSES WITH HIM POLITICAL ISSUES OR GOVERNMENT POLICY. THEIR INFREQUENT MEETINGS THESE DAYS ARE CASUAL AND SOCIAL.

5. IN CONSLUSION, PUTHUCHEARY SAID THAT WHEN HIS BROTHER DOMINIC INFORMED HIM OF THE TAPE SOME NINE MONTHS AFTER IT HAD BEEN MADE, HE (JAMES) FELT THAT IT WAS EITHER A FRAUD OR A PLANT, AND HAD NOT BEEN INTERESTED IN HEARING IT, MUCH LESS TAKING IT TO HUSSEIN. IT WAS SINGAPORE'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE GENUINENESS OF THE TAPE AND THE ACCURACY OF DAVIES' CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KUALA 02089 060817Z

SUMMARY OF THE CONVERSATION THAT RESURRECTED THE TAPE FROM OBLIVION AND GAVE IT STATUS.

6. COMMENT: PUTHUCHEARY WAS SOMEWHAT EMBARRASSED BY THE CENTRAL ROLE HE GIVES HIMSELF IN THIS SCENARIO, BUT SAID HE COULD FIND NO BETTER EXPLANATION. I HAVE OVER THE YEARS NEVER DETECTED ANY MALICE IN HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIS ONE-TIME COMRADE AND FRIEND. HE HAS SPECIAL REASONS TO KNOW OF LEE'S SHORTCOMINGS AND I HAVE HEARD HIM DISCUSS THEM COOLLY AND DISPASSIONAELTY, BUT I HAVE ALSO HEAR HIM GIVE FULL CREDIT TO LEE'S ACHIEVEMENTS AND DEFEND LEE ON WHAT HE FELT WERE UNFAIR JUDGMENTS IN GEORGE'S 1974 BOOK, LEE KUAN YEW'S SINGAPORE. IF PUTHUCHEARY IS PLAYING A DEEPER GAME, HE IS DOINT IT WITH GREAT SKILL, AND IF IT IS IN FACT HIS PURPOSE TO DAMAGE GOS-GOM RELATIONS, ALL HE NEED DO IS KEEP HIS HANDS CLEAN AND LET LEE'S SUSPICIONS MOVE THE SINGAPORE LEADER TO ACTIONS WHICH SERVE THIS OBJECTIVE.
UNDERHILL

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, TRIALS, RECORDINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 06-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KUALA02089
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770119-0814
Format: TEL
From: KUALA LUMPUR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770483/aaaacude.tel
Line Count: 116
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 992154a9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2884142
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JAMES PUTHUCHEARY'S ANALYSIS OF DEREK DAVIES TAPE CASE
TAGS: PINS, PFOR, MY, SN, (LEE KUAN YEW), (PUTHUCHEARY, JAMES)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/992154a9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009